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BOOK DEPARTMENT.

A full description of the books received, giving size, price, etc., will be found in the list of Publications Received in this issue, or, generally, in a preceding issue of the SCHOOL REVIEW.

Longman's School Geography. Text-book. 8vo. 384 pgs.

Longman's New School Atlas, Political and Physical. 39 quarto, 14 octavo maps and diagrams.

Questions Upon Longman's School Geography. Edited by GEO. G. CHISHOLM, M.A.B.Sc., Fellow of the Royal Geographical and Statistical Societies, and C. N. LÉFÈVRE, A.M., Ph.D., Fellow of the American Geographical Society.

Longman's School Geography follows the old plan of Olney, Morse, and Roswell Smith. It consists of a text-book, an atlas, and a small question book of seventy-six pages. The text-book is like nearly all the financially successful text-books upon geography ever published; it is a condensed compendium of geography, physiography, and history. It has one marked advantage over most text-books upon geography in that it contains far more text. The subjects for the compendium are all well arranged, and the facts are brought up to a late date. A geographical text-book scientifically arranged, in the order of subjects and topics and adapted to the development of the minds of the pupils, is a thing of the future.

The first text-book upon geography was a compendium and all the succeeding ones, with a few marked exceptions, have followed the same order of arrangement. The reason for this is not far to seek. The publishers adapt their books to the knowledge and skill of teachers, and anything like a scientific geography has not yet foot-hold enough in America to warrant the publication of scientific text-books in that direction. Guyot's Common School Geography is probably the best pedagogical text-book upon geography, ever published, and we are informed that the sales of that excellent book were not sufficient to pay for the printing.

The Physical Geography, or Physiography, consists of forty pages containing a brief and excellent exposition of the best modern discoveries in that direction. Special attention is given to dynamical geology, and the modeling of land surfaces. No hint, however, is given in regard to how the subject should be presented to the pupils, or how the pupils may profitably study their environment, either geographical or geological.

Geography is defined as "A description of the earth." A closer definition is the one generally used, "Geography is the description of the earth's surface." The study of the history of the present appearance of the earth's surface, especially the land modeling, is organically united with the study of geography, the present appearance; but the author stops with his compendium of interesting data in regard to physiography, without any scientific attempt to teach geography in itself, that is, the science of surface.

The Mathematical Geography is of the usual kind. It is placed first, when it should be last, and it does not contain a single suggestion how mathematical geography may be studied from facts that can be easily observed. Most pupils who study mathematical geography have gained no idea of the immense number of facts that may be gained from observation all around them.

One hundred and sixteen pages are given to the geography of America. The art of describing characteristic areas of surface in a graphic, clear and comprehensive way, is exceedingly rare. One has the feeling, upon reading many such descriptions, that the author has not a distinct mental picture of the whole, himself. The attempt to describe the surface of British America or the United States, is to be commended, but there is much in these descriptions which reminds one of the old geography of isolation; as if plateaus, mountains, and plains were not parts of one complete whole, and could not be described as any unit of architecture is described, proceeding from the whole to the parts, and following the lines of the greatest parts. For instance, the depressed axis from which the Mississippi and McKenzie rivers flow, connected by a line through the Saskatchewan river basin, is a natural line of division of North America into two great land masses, each composed of two slopes. A division of North America by this line follows the psychological law of first conceiving of the greatest wholes of which the mind is capable, and then sub-dividing that whole into the greatest parts by the most easily conceived lines. The test of a geographical description is in the mental picture gained after careful reading. The mental product that should be acquired is an individual concept corresponding to the surface of North America. It may be doubted whether the closest study of the author's description would produce such a result.

There is some confusion of terms occurring,—as "water parting" in distinction to "water shed." This sentence on page ninety-eight, is somewhat misty: "The Rocky Mountain System occupies the highest part of the plateau, and *constitutes*, or contains, the "water parting" between the rivers that flow to the Pacific and those that flow to the Mississippi and Gulf of Mexico." A "water parting" is a line, and surely the Rocky Mountain System does not constitute a line. Again on page one

hundred and two, speaking of the Colorado Plateau, it is stated that "The southern water shed of the Gila River forms its southern limit, and the continental divide, its eastern." Here "water shed" and "divide" are used synonymously with "water parting."

The authors have sought to exclude from the text-book all trivial facts, and have crowded the pages with data which are important; still it must be conceded that there is in the text-book the same conventional arrangement of facts in their usual unpedagogical order. In comparison with other text-books upon geography, Longman's Geography is admirable; in comparison with anything like an ideal of what a geography of America should be, and the wealth of facts and generalizations all ready for the future writer of geography, there is much to wish.

The questions that fill the little book of seventy-eight pages, are adapted to the arousing of thought and to the exercise of reasoning power. However, the same objections can be made to the question book, naturally, that are made to the text-book,—there is very little of logical relation in the questions.

The School Atlas, containing as its main feature, fine orographical maps combined with political charts is, it is safe to say, the best school atlas for the teaching of geography, ever published in English. The teaching of geography in America is generally limited to a conglomeration of facts in regard to political geography, with here and there, a little dash of real geography. Therefore, there has never been any great demand for structural maps. It is well known that the Germans have had such maps for a long time. The attempt of Guyot to teach structural geography in this country was a failure. Book-makers have risked the publication of very little else than old, colored, meaningless, political charts.

Longman's School Atlas contains some excellent physical or orographical maps. If the text-book and questions had been adapted to the proper teaching of the maps, it would have been all that could have been desired. In the hands of a good teacher, who understands geography himself, and who uses drawing freely, with the many excellent books which are at hand for the study of geography, such as Stanford's Compendium, this atlas might be used very efficiently as a text-book in upper grammar grades, high schools, and colleges.

As a whole, these three books may be ranked among the best of modern English geographies.

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